

NCERT Solutions for Class 12 English Vistas Chapter 8

Question 1.

The two accounts that you read above are based on two distant cultures. What is the commonality of theme found in both of them?

Answer:

Both the autobiographical extracts, based upon two distant cultures, depict the lives of two women from marginalised communities who look back at their childhood and reflect on their relationship with mainstream culture. The first account is by an American Indian woman born in the late 19th century. The account expressed the indignations suffered by the Native Americans at the hands of Christians.

She was ardently against the oppression of Native Americans in Western culture. Though she resented this mistreatment, she still aimed at bridging the wide gap between the dominant white and Native American cultures. She did not let herself get seduced into believing that her Native American traditions were folly or sin.

As a person of mixed blood, her life could be looked upon as an example of the beauty and accomplishments that are possible if the two cultures live in cooperation. The second account is by a contemporary Tamil Dalit writer. She voiced the discrimination she faced as a Dalit. She explored the impact of the discrimination, compounded by the poverty suffered by Dalit women.

The caste system had been so deeply ingrained in the Indian psyche that institutions that ought to promote egalitarianism became the means of perpetuating caste discrimination. Both these accounts are bound by the common theme of discrimination and indignity suffered by women in marginalised communities at the hands of the supposedly superior caste or culture.

Question 2.

It may take a long time for oppression to be removed, but the seeds of rebellion are sowed early in life. Do you agree that injustice in any form cannot escape being noticed even by children?

Answer:

Children are heavily influenced and conditioned by their upbringing. The social influences that they experience from childhood are often ingrained in their subconscious, and are manifested later. Children are also perceptive and keenly aware of positive and negative influences. Rebellious children manifest the 'seed' of rebellion planted at some point in their lives.

A sensitive perspective provides a means for understanding how the oppression of children occurs within multiple social contexts that interrelate to produce harmful outcomes for children. Children lack power and resources and are easy targets for adult

oppression. Children are exposed to different levels and types of oppression that vary depending on their age, socio-economic class, race, and the beliefs of their parents.

According to the theory of differential oppression, oppression leads to adaptive reactions by children: passive acceptance, exercise of illegitimate coercive power, manipulation of one's peers, and retaliation. Reducing the oppressive acts of adults and alleviating the damaging circumstances that characterise the social environment of children is critical to reducing the prevalence of juvenile delinquency and other kinds of problem behaviour. The reaction of Zitkala-Sa and Bama to the injustice they perceived as children ranged from defiance, anguish, resentment, and dejection to a fierce determination to excel.

Question 3.

Bama's experience is that of a victim of the caste system. What kind of discrimination does Zitkala-Sa's experience depict? What are their responses to their respective situations?

Answer:

Zitkala-Sa was ill-treated and discriminated against from the beginning of her journey. Native Americans, at that time, did not associate with white people and faced discrimination because of their appearance. She felt scared and extremely uncomfortable when unable to comprehend the ways of a foreign culture. Even though she hated the way she was treated, she still had to abide by rules and orders to avoid punishment. However much she suffered at the hands of cultural and racial discrimination, she managed to work her way through and never gave in to discrimination.

Similarly, Bama remained undeterred. She was convinced that she had a role to play. And it was this conviction that made her stand up for her beliefs. She championed the economic and social hardships faced by Dalits due to the discrimination by upper-caste people. Both the writers challenged accepted social practices and did not succumb to pressure. They made their voices heard, and brought to light the indignities faced by their races; they stood by what they believed to be true.